

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 25-CR-80001-Rosenberg/Reinhart

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ESTON EUREL MELTON, III,

Defendant.

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**EXHIBIT “A”**

**TO THE DEFENDANT, ESTON MELTON, III’S  
NOTICE OF FILING CHARACTER LETTERS**

**(45 CHARACTER LETTERS FOR ESTON MELTON, III)**

Eston E. Melton IV  
418 Ponce de Leon Pl  
Decatur, GA 30030

30 April 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Re: Eston "Dusty" Melton III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Eston E. Melton IV; I write to you as the eldest child of Eston "Dusty" Melton III, on whose behalf I respectfully ask for your consideration and leniency when imposing his sentence. While I am aware of the serious nature of the charge to which he has pleaded guilty, I am compelled to share with you the man I know, his character, and the circumstances that led him here.

My father has always been deeply devoted to our family and community. He is at his core a civic-minded person. He led his school newspaper to receive the first collegiate Robert F. Kennedy Award for Excellence in Journalism for their coverage of racial discrimination by campus leaders. As a *Miami Herald* journalist, he covered Miami's ever-complicated local politics. Later, Dusty was my Boy Scout troop's instructor for the Citizenship in the Community and the Citizenship in the Nation merit badges. I was proud to see my father rise to national leadership and recognition in the Boy Scouts -- and prouder when he resigned those posts and awards in allyship to pressure the program to stop discriminating against gay and atheist Scouts. His orientation toward fairness and civic responsibility were hallmarks of my upbringing. These values helped propel my own public-service career as a journalism teacher, school administrator, and school district executive. I strive to instill them in his 10-year-old granddaughter, Genevieve.

I believe there are values we hold, and that there are values that *hold us*. My father holds value in civic responsibility -- but Dusty is *held by* the value he places on family. The decisions that led to criminal misconduct were not motivated by avarice but instead spawned from a desire to care for his loved ones while enmeshed in trying financial straits. He did not try to conceal his tax obligation; indeed, he has filed his taxes on time throughout his life. Motivation might not be a factor in determining criminal behavior, but I hope it will be a consideration in assigning his sentence.

I ask you also to consider my father's age. The Bureau of Prisons reports only 3.0% of prisoners are over age 65. At 71 and with several health challenges, I cannot help but be concerned about the health effects during and after incarceration. I hope home confinement is under consideration as a sentence. My father's charge and guilty plea have been widely reported, and that shame likely has as broad a deterrence value as a sentence. Home confinement, meanwhile, would better situate Dusty to earn an income to pay the government what he owes. I suspect administering a period of incarceration will likely add to Dusty's negative balance sheet with the government -- again, with negligible deterrence value beyond the shame of his widely-exposed criminal behavior and fall from grace.

He has pleaded guilty and accepts the consequences. I ask for your mercy and understanding, Your Honor, in light of his fundamental character, his lifetime of prioritizing his family, and the significant personal and financial hardship he has already endured and continues to face. He is a good man who, under overwhelming pressure, made poor decisions while striving to provide for our family.

Thank you for considering my letter.

Respectfully,

 —

Eston E. Melton IV

May 27, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I appreciate the time you devote to each letter that comes across your desk, and I hope mine adds a personal dimension to the life of Eston “Dusty” Melton III, my father. Over these 28 years, he has been —first and always—a devoted husband, father, and lifelong Scout whose guiding question each morning is, “Who needs my help today?” From quietly delivering meals to neighbors to teaching young Scouts that “doing a good turn daily” means more than just words, he has woven service and compassion into every corner of our community.

Perspective guides us. In my own life, when I faced moments that felt insurmountable, he reminded me that our choices define our path—and that every setback carries the seed of renewal. His counsel during my most difficult period taught me that accountability and kindness are not opposing forces but partners in growth.

Now, at over 70 years old and navigating a battle with prostate cancer, his instinct remains unchanged: to care for his family, to share what he’s learned, and to live with purpose until his last breath. I haven’t asked him what believes will or should happen as we ready ourselves mentally for what is just a few weeks away. Instead, I think on how much good and benefit my father will continue to provide beyond this experience.

When perspective illuminates our decisions, justice finds room for compassion. In considering how a man of such character can continue to contribute—guided by the very lessons he’s spent a lifetime teaching—I end my reflections believing that mercy and fairness walk hand in hand. Thank you for your service, for seeing beyond the records to the people who stand behind them, and for your perspective.

Respectfully yours,



Mario R. Melton

786.769.9115 / admin@pixaire.com

Eric Singer  
Tel 305-350-2354  
Fax 305-351-2170  
esinger@bilzin.com

March 24, 2025

Hon. Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Re:** Dusty Melton

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

In the months that have passed since I first learned of Dusty's crime, I have made no real progress in making any sense of it. Dusty has been a dear friend for many years—I know him well, both personally and professionally. And I am in complete shock. Committing any crime, let alone a serious felony, is anathema to Dusty's character. One of the most frustrating aspects of Dusty's situation is that those who do *not* know him well, or only know him through his conviction, might reasonably define him by that conviction. I have no doubt that many strangers have read about Dusty in the newspaper and scoffingly expressed no surprise at his conviction. After all, Dusty is a professional lobbyist, a career not typically associated with high moral standards. But what makes his crime so perplexing, and so out of character, is that Dusty has always been uniquely and unerringly committed to following the law and his conscience. That is so even though he works in an environment where such scrupulousness is rarely practiced and never rewarded. Dusty was not a criminal waiting to be caught—I cannot think of anyone in my life more devoted to following rules than Dusty, and I truly believe that Dusty's crime was the result of a singular lapse in judgement. Although Dusty must be sentenced for that crime, please consider a lenient sentence without imprisonment. Dusty is a good person, and there is so much good he would do if allowed to remain as a member of society.

I will not endeavor to capture Dusty in only a few paragraphs. I hope that you will receive letters from others in his life, and that together those letters might begin to illustrate how wonderful a person he is, and how much he means to, and how much he does for, so many people. I will instead focus on a few aspects of Dusty's life and character for which I may have relatively unique insights. I am a government-contracts attorney, and I typically work with lobbyists when pursuing government contracts. It was in that context that I first met Dusty shortly after I moved to Miami and began practicing law, and I have worked with him on numerous projects over the past fourteen years. There are three attributes to Dusty's approach to lobbying that I believe can help elucidate his character—and highlight just how out of character this crime truly is.

First, Dusty does not participate in political campaigns. It may be impossible to overstate just how unusual this is for a lobbyist. It is standard practice for lobbyists to raise funds for political

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campaigns in the jurisdictions in which they practice. Dusty's abstinence is not required by any law or regulation, but is rather fueled by his own conscience. Dusty fundamentally believes that a lobbyist should persuade elected officials solely by making good arguments rooted in facts and public policy—and not by courting favor through other means. I have no doubt that Dusty's reluctance to fundraise has at times hurt him professionally. And yet he has chosen to accept that handicap rather than deviate from his own sense of right and wrong. I wish the cynical newspaper readers knew this.

Second, Dusty is a committed rule-follower. Lobbying is a heavily regulated field, with numerous regulations designed to prevent undue influence, collusion, fraud, and other wrongdoing. Dusty can recite each of these rules (and more often than not, he can also explain the history of the rule—who adopted it, when, and what evil it was intended to cure), and Dusty practices what he preaches. He files every form, checks every box, and never even considers crossing a line. I have on several occasions witnessed Dusty refuse a direct request to break, or even bend, one of those rules in order to gain an advantage for a client. I have also observed Dusty lose business as a direct result of such a refusal. Dusty is well aware of the price he pays professionally for following the rules so scrupulously. And yet, I have never once heard him express doubt about his approach—he is so committed to following the rules that he does not consider the alternative to even be an option.

Even though lobbyists are not rewarded for following the rules, or for refusing to fundraise for political campaigns, Dusty is nonetheless incredibly effective as a lobbyist. He has achieved amazing results for his clients—always by putting in the work and doing things the right way. And his effectiveness as a lobbyist animates the final attribute I wish to highlight—Dusty's commitment to serving those in need. Dusty always has numerous *pro bono* clients, and he fights for his small, not-for-profit clients every bit as hard as for his large, corporate clients. Again, this is truly unique. Lobbyists do not have the equivalent of a Florida Bar rule encouraging *pro bono* work, nor does Dusty work for a large firm that can subsidize his unpaid efforts. Dusty serves those in need because he believes it is the right thing to do, despite the lack of any associated recognition or reward.

I know that "lobbyist" is often viewed as a dirty word. And if I didn't know Dusty, I might understand that sentiment. But Dusty elevates the word. He practices his craft as honorably, and as justly, as any doctor or teacher or any other professional. I cannot contest that Dusty's lapse in judgment was a serious one. But Dusty's otherwise unparalleled commitment to following the law, and to justice, leads to the conclusion that the lapse in judgment for which he was convicted is not in any way susceptible to repetition. Please consider sparing Dusty any imprisonment. He is an ethical and honorable person—as honorable as they come—and he will no doubt continue to serve those in need and make the world a better place if permitted to stay at home with his family.

Sincerely,

Eric Singer

**Dennis Pastrana**

520 Brickell Key Drive, PH 11

Miami, Florida, 33131

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

In May 2014 I retired after serving for 49 years as President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Florida, Inc. in Miami. Our mission was to help individuals with disabilities and special needs to become independent and self-supporting citizens.

I started with Goodwill in 1979. It was a small, broke, defeated, and demoralized organization. Indeed, the Board of Directors was contemplating filing for bankruptcy as a legal recourse. With hard work, and the help of many people like Mr. Eston "Dusty" Melton III, Goodwill (South Florida) became one of the largest and most successful Goodwill operations in America.

A few statistics are relevant. During a 34-year timeframe, the number of employees increased from 185 to over 2,800. Payroll multiplied from \$1.2 to \$28.0 million annually in *new earnings for people with disabilities and special needs who were previously unemployed*. During this timeframe, Goodwill helped more than 49,000 people and created in excess of \$493 million in new earnings for those members of our community who are most vulnerable and challenged with respect to such basic aspirations as self-sufficiency in meeting the rudimentary requirements for food and shelter.

Goodwill's economic model first was galvanized by the benefits of pursuing Federal Government contracts suitable for the employment of workers with special needs. Goodwill South Florida was fortunate to acquire two government contracts for servicing federal buildings located in Downtown Miami, which included the Federal Justice Building. It is with respect to the next strategic economic plan of pursuing local government contracts that Mr. Dusty Melton enters the picture. He is one of those special human beings who contributed to improving the lot of the poor and disabled by empowering them to help themselves, and providing those with special needs with the dignity of self-sufficiency and economic stability. Mr. Melton helped Goodwill navigate the local contract procurement process that is rife with bureaucratic deficits, pitfalls, and operational insufficiencies. He served as an elite and qualified professional who guided Goodwill through this local political maze, and did so (by any metric) well beyond the call of duty.

Mr. Melton's professional interaction with Goodwill South Florida invariably led him to develop a deep and comprehensive understanding of Goodwill's mission, i.e., of the human and humane consequences of Goodwill's commercial success, in part, through the procurement of the referenced local government contracts. He developed a passion for Goodwill's mission. The way in which those with special needs were assimilated into the workplace and lifted out of poverty and into a quite dignified working class touched Mr. Melton at a personal level. Consequently, he often worked beyond the scope of technical engagements in order to help Goodwill Enterprises create jobs and generate vocational training opportunities for Miami-Dade County's special needs population. He thought that it was important to provide the poor and the disenfranchised with more than just abstract hope. Supplying them with actual jobs and training

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opportunities so they can aspire to vertical growth within a corporate structure also became Mr. Melton's passion. On more than one occasion he shared with me that these tangible gifts to others in the form of professional and vocational opportunities transformed not just his view of the world, but also his life.

Mr. Melton was helpful in assisting Goodwill South Florida develop a workforce that (i) ranked Goodwill as one of two of the largest non-profit corporations in Florida, (ii) South Florida's third largest employer, (iii) one of the five largest manufacturing facilities in Miami-Dade County, and (iv) the largest employer of people with special needs in the entirety of the State of Florida. A man who contributed to this level of success for people that have little more than the voice of silence merits this Honorable Court's attention, consideration, and clemency.

Throughout the years I have come to know Mr. Melton and his family very well. We have shared family milestones, accomplishments and many personal moments. I know to a moral certainty that he is a man of principles who values the well-being of his family and of others greatly, and far beyond his own self-interest.

I have the utmost respect and personal admiration for Mr. Melton. It is impossible for me to reduce to mere words my sense of gratitude for all that he has done for the poor, the disabled, and the most marginalized members of our community. Your Honor, please consider these facts in exercising the judicial discretion that you are vested with in sentencing Mr. Melton.

Respectfully,

Dennis Pastrana

Karen Schneier Dresbach  
3140 Canterbury Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33434

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse - c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

April 17, 2025

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I am writing to you on behalf of Eston "Dusty" Melton, III whom I have known for over 25 years. In 1999, we first met through his wife, Mabel when I was a Director of American Red Cross of Miami and the Keys and she was Vice President of PR.

One year later I became the President of the National MS Society of South Florida, and Mabel served as our Advocacy and PR consultant for over 10 years. In all of my dealings in Miami whenever Dusty's name came up, his reputation was universally touted as a man dedicated to "doing right" by his family, city, state and clients and it was my impression and experience that he had a very high moral compass, was extremely thoughtful, direct and always a fan and advocate of the underdog.

We became close friends. How can I describe Dusty? I would sum it up as follows: "He always showed up - you could count on him no matter what your circumstances were personally or professionally". We attended each other's family celebrations and holiday events. And although, I am Jewish, both he and Mabel went out of their way to provide kosher alternatives at Christmas and Thanksgiving for me when I was the only one at the large gathering who needed the accommodation. During my challenging divorce he provided strong emotional support and truly cared.

Throughout the years, I was able to witness firsthand and learn of the personal and financial strain that was put upon Dusty with his large extended blended family and what was expected of him. Five teenagers, school and college expenses, alimony, running a business and supporting two households. He never wanted to shirk his responsibilities. Evading making full payments to the IRS seems so out of touch with the man I have come to know all these years. A good man who made a very bad mistake. Dusty is now broken from his own behavior; he is remorseful, devastated and humiliated by his own actions. He also has struggled with cancer the past few years.

Judge Rosenberg, I respectfully ask that you consider granting leniency to Dusty and not commit him to prison. There is so much good he could do in the community, mentoring young people, helping non-profits on a shoestring budget and those less fortunate if he were put on probation or house arrest and sentenced to countless community service hours. Many more in society, who are in desperate need could benefit from his assistance, knowledge and time rather than placing him in jail.

Thank you for your time to read my appeal.

Respectfully,



Karen Schneier Dresbach  
(954) 662-4440



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Vicki L. Lopez*

District 113

**District Office:**

PO Box 450100  
Miami, FL 33145  
(305) 315-0740

vicki.lopez@flhouse.gov

**Tallahassee Office:**

222 Capitol Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5113

March 22, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Your Honor:

I have known Eston “Dusty” Melton, personally and professionally, for more than 30 years. I write to share my observations and thoughts as you prepare to sentence him for evading payment of his federal income taxes.

This is a serious offense, and I was shocked to learn of Dusty’s wrong behavior so many years ago. I had always known him to be a person of complete integrity, who held himself and others to the highest standards of ethical conduct. His failure to pay his taxes – taxes that he continuously and honestly told the government every year that he owed – strikes me as a singularly uncharacteristic, bad choice in a 71-year life otherwise lived with honor and distinction.

I have spoken to Dusty since he entered his guilty plea in your courtroom: His remorse, embarrassment and humiliation, in my opinion, are as genuine as it gets. Dusty understands that he will never, ever regain the stellar reputation he once had among Greater Miami’s professional lobbyists, among elected officials and government professionals and clients with whom he has dealt during his 42-year career, and most important within his community and among some whom he once could call friends. The landscape ahead for Dusty is entirely bleak.



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Vicki L. Lopez*

District 113

**District Office:**

PO Box 450100  
Miami, FL 33145  
(305) 315-0740

**Tallahassee Office:**

222 Capitol Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5113

vicki.lopez@flhouse.gov

I know what it is like to serve time in a federal prison, which I did as a consequence of my 1997 conviction for honest services fraud in the Middle District of Florida. My 27-month sentence was commuted by then-President Bill Clinton in November 2000, and nearly 11 years later my conviction was vacated by the District Court – with the support of my prosecutor – following the U.S. Supreme Court’s correction of the definition of the crime for which I was incarcerated.

I share this to frame my respectful thoughts about the punishment Dusty will receive. First and foremost, Dusty has taken complete and very public responsibility for his actions, and has executed a plea agreement to that effect. Second, Dusty has a legacy of many modest, but some enormous, charitable works benefiting countless persons in Miami-Dade County and across this country: There is every reason to believe that Dusty will continue that strong *pro bono* element of his business practice. Third, in many ways including his business matters and robust involvement in civic affairs, Dusty has been a productive, constructive member of society and will continue to be that person.

I have been involved in criminal justice reform efforts since 2005, when I was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to chair the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force, whose responsibilities included identifying barriers to successful reentry and providing recommendations to eliminate them. Dusty simply does not fit the profile of the thousands of men and women whom I met across the many years of my work, in and out of prison.

From my experience dealing with corrections, I strongly believe that society would be best served with Dusty being required to spend his time, treasure and talents giving back to his community – rather than languishing in a prison cell for a lengthy time. I know better than most that the alarmingly overcrowded situation throughout America’s prison system, and the lack of any useful and productive programming behind those walls, means that Dusty would be unable to contribute meaningfully should he receive a prison sentence.



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Vicki L. Lopez*

District 113

**District Office:**

PO Box 450100  
Miami, FL 33145  
(305) 315-0740

**Tallahassee Office:**

222 Capitol Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
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(850) 717-5113

vicki.lopez@flhouse.gov

I consider it an honor and privilege to speak on his behalf. Dusty will survive this tragedy, although not unscathed, but he will go on to make us all proud for taking responsibility for his actions the rest of his life. He is just that kind of person, and nothing could ever or will ever stand in the way of his principles.

I respectfully urge you to apply as much compassion in your sentencing as you are able in good conscience.

Respectfully,

*Vicki L. Lopez*

Vicki L. Lopez  
State Representative  
District 113



TRANSPORTATION AMERICA

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Re: Letter of Reference for Eston “Dusty” Melton III**

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am respectfully submitting this character Letter of Reference on behalf of Eston “Dusty” Melton III for your consideration in connection to his sentencing.

I have had the pleasure of personally knowing and collaborating with Dusty since 1999, but I have had the privilege of following his work long before our 26-year friendship. By way of background, I have always been interested in politics; particularly, local politics. Growing up, I was fascinated reading Dusty’s coverage as a government reporter for the *Miami Herald*. He just had a unique way of communicating what many might otherwise characterize as boring and/or complex subject matter. Indeed, Dusty’s reporting helped motivate me to choose the professional path that I pursued.

After earning my undergraduate, graduate, and law degrees, I accepted a job with Miguel De Grandy – who had headed the Greenberg Traurig governmental law division, but had decided to open a boutique legal and lobbying firm, concentrating on representing clients before local and state public agencies. It was in this capacity that I was fortunate to collaborate with Dusty on joint lobbying representations. What a treat for a young professional to observe the strategic thinking of someone whose words I was fond of reading, but then, became fortunate to observe firsthand the thought-process and conceptualization of complicated matters that he framed in a seemingly effortless manner for all to understand. And while I was younger, Dusty was always generous with his time and interactions, and viewed me as an equal.

This professional collaboration quickly became personal, as we would share stories about my growing family, and his lovely family, which he was, and remains, so fond of. Every personal interaction started and ended with his love for Mabel, and peppered in between were updates about the academic and professional achievements of his children. During these conversations, Dusty was always mindful of my strong connection with my ailing parents – which, during our friendship, were both diagnosed with cancer... Never did a day go by that I spoke to Dusty when he did not ask about my Mom and Dad. And when I lost my Dad, he made sure not only to routinely continue asking about my Mom, but to make that genuine connection that only Dusty can make. It is an innate kindness that I wish more of my friends could convey...

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May 5, 2025

**Letter of Reference for Eston “Dusty” Melton III**

During the course of our friendship, I was offered an opportunity to take a leadership role with Transportation America & Related Entities as the Chief Operating Officer, which ironically operates a Division where Dusty and I found ourselves on the opposite side of issue(s). This quandary was unique, as it afforded me the opportunity to try to outfox someone I respect and admire professionally. Interestingly, we oftentimes found common ground when we were on conflicting sides of an issue to the mutual benefit of competing entities. Dusty’s professional acumen, good faith interactions, and ability to get things done ultimately motivated me to engage him and Mabel to assist our Company with new business opportunities in Palm Beach County. Indeed, the decision to suggest engaging Dusty and Mabel coincided with the news coverage of this unfortunate matter. Certainly, there were those that chose to stay away from Dusty as he has been mired under a dark cloud as he has navigated these tumultuous waters; but frankly, I had no reservation about continuing my association with Dusty as I know the true measure and character of this man. While I was, indeed, surprised, and disappointed in the wrong decision that he made, I knew that the indiscretion was not motivated by greed and extravagance.

Regardless, simply stated, those that support Dusty know that there is no legal justification for his lapse of judgment. However, those that know Dusty as I do pray – and respectfully appeal to the Court – to consider the totality of a life otherwise responsibly and well lived. A life of hard work and dedication that puts family and friendship first. A life that inspired people like me to want to be an accomplished communicator. A life that motivates someone like me – and I would suspect, many others – to write a character Letter of Reference in support of someone that has admitted to making a terrible mistake, and has faced public humiliation. Frankly, I am proud to support Dusty during this challenging time, and am privileged to call him my friend.

While I have always been thoroughly impressed with Dusty’s intellect, I am most impressed with his genuine desire to help others – a trait that, regrettably, is blurred by this case. Despite this terrible decision, having known Dusty for many years, I can say from personal experience that he is an otherwise honorable man, with strong moral convictions. For these reasons, and many others, I deferentially ask that this Court favorably consider and weigh the meaningful and positive impact that Dusty has had on my, and many other lives. He will, no doubt, carry the shame and the burden of his actions with him forever. However, I am convinced that his continued participation and efforts in our society will be of great and consequential benefit to all that come across Dusty’s path. I thank you for your consideration of my character Letter of Reference on behalf of Eston “Dusty” Melton III.

Sincerely,



Nick Mazorra, Chief Operating Officer  
Transportation America & Related Entities

**March 10, 2025**

**The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg**

United States District Court Judge

Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202

701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Dear Judge Rosenberg,**

I am writing to share my perspective on Eston “Dusty” Melton, a man whose impact on Miami-Dade County has been profound and enduring. I have known Dusty for over twenty years. We met when I was a young lawyer in the Miami-Dade County Mayor’s office.

For decades, Dusty has been a champion of fairness. He is a steadfast advocate who never hesitates to call out inequities in government processes, even when they are unpopular or inconvenient. His work has always been rooted in the belief that good governance requires transparency, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to doing what is right.

Dusty is famous for his *Jerry Maguire* moments—his legendary, unfiltered letters that cut through bureaucracy and exposed unfair dealings. In the film, sports agent Jerry Maguire has a crisis of conscience and writes a mission statement, laying out a bold, idealistic vision for how his industry should operate—with more honesty and fewer backroom deals. That moment of raw sincerity cost him his job but earned him deep respect. Dusty’s letters, much like Maguire’s mission statement, weren’t always what people wanted to hear, but they were what needed to be said. And time and again, he was proven right.

Remarkably, despite spending decades as one of Miami-Dade’s most influential figures, Dusty was known for one thing few in his profession could ever claim: he never participated in political contributions. To my knowledge, in all his years of practice, he never cut a single check to a candidate. Yet, every generation of elected officials—regardless of party or ideology—welcomed him with an open door. That level of respect, built purely on his reputation for fairness and his honest counsel, is a testament to the kind of person he is.

I do not fully understand why Dusty did not meet his tax obligations, but I recognize that he was under immense personal and financial strain. He made an impossible choice—prioritizing his family’s needs, including the extraordinary burden of funding his son’s legal defense, over his tax obligations. While it was the wrong choice, it was never about deceit or personal enrichment. His remorse is deep and genuine, and he has taken full responsibility for his actions.

Despite this difficult chapter, Dusty remains the same man who has dedicated his career to bettering our community. His absence from civic life would be a loss not just for those who know

Luis Andre Gazitua  
150 Alhambra Circle  
Suite 900  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
05/30/25DM-CL-000014

him personally but for the countless people who have benefitted from his principled approach to government and advocacy.

I respectfully ask that the court consider Dusty's lifetime of contributions, deep remorse, and the unique circumstances that led to this case. He is far more valuable to our community as an active, engaged citizen than he would be behind bars.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luis Andre Gazitua".

**Luis Andre Gazitua, Esq.**

Luis Andre Gazitua  
150 Alhambra Circle  
Suite 900  
Coral Gables, Fl. 33134  
05/30/25DM-CL-000015



B E R K O W I T Z   D E V E L O P M E N T   G R O U P

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Pail G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Re: Eston ("Dusty") Melton, III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I have known Dusty Melton for almost 45 years. In 1980, I was appointed by the chief judge in for Dade County to serve as the executive director of the Independent Review Panel, a civilian review board created in the wake of the McDuffie and LaFleur riots in Miami. At that time, Dusty Melton was a reporter for The Miami Herald and covered our deliberations. From that time forward, I have found Dusty Melton to be not only incredibly talented, civic minded, but a man of great integrity. His reporting was fair, accurate and insightful.

As my career progressed from practicing law to real estate development, I have been involved in innumerable civic, charitable and political endeavors. Among my most cherished accomplishments, was my involvement in the founding of the Miami Children's Museum over 40 years ago. I was instrumental in the initial fundraising for the building of the iconic Museum at its Watson Island home. I have served as chairman of the museum for the past 12 years, during which time I have had the opportunity and the pleasure to work with Dusty Melton on numerous issues regarding the funding for the continued survival of the museum during some very difficult, economic storms. His pro bono assistance over many years, proved invaluable. He gave generously of himself and his time to assist our efforts on behalf of the museum whenever we sought his help.

I fully understand the nature of his failure to pay his income taxes when due. I understand, but do not condone, his decision to prioritize the care and well-being of his family over his legal obligation to pay his taxes, when he clearly did not have the ability to fund both. I have absolutely no doubt that if he had had the financial resources to have paid 100% of his obligations, that he would have done so in a heartbeat. I honestly believe that there is no benefit to society to incarcerate Dusty at this stage of his life. It would be far more

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
March 13, 2025  
Page 2

productive and equitable for him to be required to commit his talents to community service and to be given the opportunity to earn enough to start paying down his tax obligation.

I have spoken to Dusty and he is totally remorseful at the situation that he has created for himself. I believe the shame and embarrassment that he has caused to his own reputation and to his family is appropriate punishment. Dusty is deserving of whatever leniency you consider just and appropriate.

I am available to testify at the sentencing hearing.

Very truly yours,

Jeffrey A. Berkowitz

JLB/eg



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\*deceased

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Pail G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
Re: Eston ("Dusty") Melton, III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I have known Dusty Melton since July 2009, when the Chairman of the Board of the Miami Children's Museum, Mr. Jeff Berkowitz, made an introduction. What was supposed to be a quick conversation related to the City of Miami has turned into almost 2 decades of Mr. Melton (Dusty) unselfishly giving in support of the Miami Children's Museum.

As CEO of a not-for-profit institution, navigating local government entities is of paramount importance, and Dusty has always provided solid and valuable counsel. He has elevated the Miami Children's Museum to the level of the other major cultural organizations in Miami-Dade County. Over the years Dusty's efforts and counsel have resulted in an additional \$12 million dollars to fund our educational programs that impact the lives of children and families in our region.

When I learned of the charges facing Dusty, I was shocked and of course disappointed, as I had always respected him for his honesty and integrity. I still do have great respect for him as a member of our community and, more importantly, as a man committed to his family. I believe he sincerely regrets his actions. Once his shame and embarrassment subsided and he explained how his financial situation was focused on his family's needs, I somewhat understood what had occurred. I believe that he has suffered from embarrassment, public disappointment and person regrets.

Your honor, I hope that you will give thoughtful consideration to a sentence without incarceration. In my humble opinion, I suggest that Dusty Melton be sentenced to community service, where his expertise could be used to educate and empower other not-for-profit institutions. I also believe that his experiences could help to educate the next generation about upholding the high standards of ethics and values, both professionally and personally.

I am available to answer any questions and to personally appear in your court if needed.

Sincerely

Deborah Spiegelman  
CEO/Executive Director  
Miami Children's Museum

April 7, 2025

Barbara K. Bisno, Esq.  
1000 Venetian Way #603  
Miami, Florida  
Cell: 786 390 4134  
Email: [bbisno@comcast.net](mailto:bbisno@comcast.net)

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I have known Dusty Melton for more than two decades.

I was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Civil Division of the Southern District of Florida in Miami for 14 years; during my last bit of time there, I served as the Civil Health Care Fraud Coordinator, focusing on Medicare fraud. When I retired in 2002, I became a community activist. My first project was to lead the opposition to the LED digital billboards in Miami. I soon learned the guru on the County sign ordinance, because he essentially wrote it, was a guy named Dusty Melton. This was in the early 2000's when a real estate developer wanted to build a gigantic billboard tower in our "arts district." Thus began my learning from, friendship with, and dependency on Dusty Melton for enormous community, nonprofit assistance. Of course, I also soon learned he was a helpmate to our museums and other community institutions throughout the County. Always, we could count on his smile, no problem attitude to do for us what we fumbled around with ourselves.

He always spoke lovingly of Mabel and his children, though I think I met his wife only once at a community fundraiser for some nonprofit and now have learned how talented his son Mario is as an internet manager for Scenic Miami, Inc., the nonprofit Dusty and those of us who opposed the billboards started years ago. The organization wilted a bit as Miami lost some interest in billboards; however, when the museums wanted gigantic signs again, Dusty was at our side to reestablish Scenic Miami, Inc.

As I know Dusty as a proud family man and an honest, straight forward, businessman citizen with nary any interests contrary to the community's best welfare, you can imagine how much I have ached for my good friend in his current court circumstances. If a book would want to publish a picture of a man who made out-of-character very poor judgments which affect himself and his family and federal tax revenues, but never would injure or diminish another human being, I submit the picture should be of Dusty Melton.

I have had the unhappy experience of dealing with men and women, young and old, who cheat and deal fraudulently without a bit of regret. I worked with my criminal division AUSA colleagues to take back their assets and put them in prison. In my view, nothing would be gained by our community if Dusty were separated from his family and friends by incarceration. I hope with all my heart you will agree when you consider his case.

Respectfully,



Barbara K. Bisno

March 30, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing this letter to express my support for Eston “Dusty” Melton III, a man I have had the privilege of knowing both professionally and personally for over 37 years. Throughout this time, I have known Dusty to be a man of unwavering integrity, generosity, and dedication to his family, community, and profession.

As a zoning attorney early in my career, I had the opportunity to work alongside Dusty as we represented clients before the Miami-Dade County Commission. His expert guidance was invaluable in navigating the complexities of the zoning process, and I was always impressed by his ethical approach and steadfast dedication to his work. His integrity in professional matters was mirrored in his private life—Dusty is a man who values honesty, hard work, and family above all else.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dusty has always been deeply committed to his community. From an early age, Dusty’s commitment to promoting the community was evident. Dusty served as a troop leader with the Boy Scouts of America, where he encouraged others to help those in need. This is just one example of his selflessness and willingness to invest his time in shaping young lives. Decades later and despite his demanding career, he has consistently dedicated countless hours to mentoring and guiding the next generation, all while being a constant presence in the lives of his own children.

Dusty’s devotion to his family is undeniable. He made significant personal sacrifices to ensure that his children—and those of his wife, Mabel—had access to the best education possible. He personally funded tuition and related expenses for his three biological children to attend four-year out-of-state colleges, and together with Mabel, he also supported her son’s education through undergraduate, graduate, and law school. Their dedication to family and to building a successful business while meeting these financial obligations speaks volumes about their work ethic and values.

Dusty's personal and professional accomplishments cannot overcome the legal dilemma he now navigates through. These are uncharted waters for a man highly respected by many in the community because of his altruistic persona. Due to this lapse in judgment, I have witnessed how this legal situation has taken an immense toll on Dusty emotionally, financially, and personally—and his family has equally suffered from it.

While his lapse in judgment regarding his tax obligations was a mistake, it does not define him. On the contrary, he has faced this challenge head-on, taken full responsibility, and expressed deep remorse. He understands that he should have made different choices, and he has worked diligently to make amends.

I respectfully ask that the Court consider the totality of Dusty's character, his lifelong contributions, and the circumstances that led to this case. At this stage in his life, taking into consideration his advanced age and myriad medical conditions, I hope he is not harshly penalized. Dusty is a good man who has positively impacted countless lives (and someone who I genuinely believe will continue to impact lives), and I trust that the Court will recognize his genuine remorse and the extraordinary person he is beyond this legal matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Herminio San Roman, Esq.

Law Offices of

P A B L O A C O S T A , P . A .

May 19, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am Pablo Acosta, a practicing attorney here in South Florida for over 30 years. I have known and worked directly/indirectly with Eston "Dusty" Melton in the local governmental affairs professional community for over 20 years. During this time, I have come to know Dusty as a professional, a community person and a family man. I was troubled and surprised to hear about this case knowing Dusty professionally, an individual that always adheres to our local rules and requirements in the governmental affairs and lobbying community. It is for this reason that I'm writing this character letter for Dusty.

In my experiences with Dusty, he has always been a reliable professional in the representation of his clients. From my view he has been there for the community and has performed hundreds of "pro-bono" hours of work to advance the interest of various not for profits in South Florida including but not limited to Farm Share, Goodwill Industries of South Florida and the Boy Scouts of America. He has proven that he gives back!

Most importantly, in the time I have known Dusty he has supported in all aspects his children and stepchildren, including in their adult lives. I understand that this dedication has placed a great financial strain on Dusty. I also understand the seriousness of this tax case, but it is imperative to know that Dusty has been all about providing for his family and rest assured not about maintaining some extravagant lifestyle. Dusty should continue to be there for his family and our community. It is with this that I hope that this court will show some leniency in its sentencing phase.

It is my sincere hope that this court will take this letter into consideration.

Sincerely,



Pablo Acosta, Esq.

Michael J. Rosen, P.A.  
100 S.E. Second Street  
Suite 3400/Miami Tower  
Miami, Florida 33131

Mr. Rosen, what follows is a letter in support of Dusty Melton

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

This missive is written in support of Dusty Melton, whom you will sentence on May 14, 2025.

I have known Mr. Melton for over 30 years. During that entire time, his intelligence, honesty, character, devotion and *raison d'être* has been to help people in anyway he could. Regarding his professional, government relations career, ask anyone in Miami Dade County government who the most honest, effective lobbyist was and without hesitation, the name Dusty Melton immediately comes to mind.

I got to know Dusty even better when, as an executive with Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, I was tasked with the nearly impossible goal of keeping David Beckham (of soccer fame) from being given Royal Caribbean's parking lot in order to build a soccer stadium on Port Miami. To say it was an uphill, unpopular battle is to underestimate Mr. Beckham's popularity and political clout. Pretty much our entire community, from county commissioners to local mayors to chambers of commerce to economic development organizations to downtown development authorities all wanted Mr. Beckham to succeed.

The very first call I made to assist me in this effort was to Dusty Melton. I did so for two very important reasons: his reputation as the best county lobbyist and also his reputation for veracity. We began our effort on April 1, 2014 and on May 20, just six weeks later, defeated Mr. Beckham in a 12-1 vote by the Miami Dade County Commission. While we had a team that included PR, marketing, legal and other professionals, it was Dusty's lobbying of county commissioners that carried the day.

That did not come as news to anyone that knows Dusty. Those character traits are obvious in every aspect of his life: his family, his friends and professional associates, to name a very few.

What is perhaps much less known is what Dusty often stood for outside his professional career. Many years ago, for example, he fought for gays to be allowed to become Boy Scout members, a hugely unpopular stance at the time. There was little sympathy for LGBTQ+ and no DEI organization pushing for these rights. Dusty, an Eagle Scout himself, simply felt it was the right thing to do and he succeeded! He overcame this major hurdle because of his perfect sense of right and wrong, his determination to see things through and his unparalleled civility.

Due to recent publicity about his case, it has been well documented that his income tax evasion was not for his personal gain, but rather to unselfishly support his wife, his children and his stepson. Clearly, Dusty is not your typical income tax evader. As such, please consider what is written here and what you will undoubtedly hear from many others.

I close by noting that I am an attorney by profession, have been blessed with a great career and travelled to many corners of our world. Dusty remains one of the finest people I have ever met.

With respect,  
  
John P. Fox



Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing on behalf of Eston Melton, whom I have known for more than thirty years. I understand that Mr. Melton has agreed to plead guilty to an information that charges him with the offense, *Attempt to Evade and Defeat Tax, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7201*, and is scheduled for sentencing on May 14, 2025. While I fully respect the court's responsibility to administer justice, I respectfully request that you consider Mr. Melton's character and our long-standing relationship as you consider an appropriate sentence. Since I have known Mr. Melton, I have consistently observed him to be a zealous and ethical professional, a committed and responsible civic player, a generous and compassionate contributor to service and charitable organizations, a leader and mentor to younger citizens, and a passionately devoted family elder.

I was a public officer in the late nineteen seventies when Mr. Melton was a hard-hitting reporter for Miami's largest newspaper of general circulation. Despite our adversary roles, Mr. Melton conducted himself with utmost fairness and professionalism. An abiding friendship arose out of the relationship.

Mr. Melton was a long-time contributor and principled leader of the Boy Scouts of America, with nationwide influence, and he is well known for his outspoken advocacy for governmental transparency and accountability.

Judge Rosenberg, please note the extraordinary extent to which Eston Melton has taken responsibility for his actions by his execution of the Plea Agreement, and by the public expression of his regret and remorse for the unwise choices he made in a full and candid interview that was published in the *Miami Herald* newspaper.

I respectfully urge the Court to consider a sentence that allows for Eston Melton's rehabilitation and redemption, and the restoration of his standing and productivity in the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George F. Knox

856 SW Grand Reserve Blvd.

Port St Lucie, Florida 34986

[Gknox1017@gmail.com](mailto:Gknox1017@gmail.com)

305-467-6394

*Jeri Muoio, Ph.D.*  
2701 Tecumseh Dr  
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing this letter to provide a character reference for Eston "Dusty" Melton, whom I have had the privilege of knowing as my neighbor for approximately three years. I met Dusty through his wife Mabel. Mabel is very active in the West Palm Beach community serving on City committees and on the Board of the Hispanic Human Resources Council. They have both been in my home, and I in theirs', on several occasions. During this time, I have come to know Dusty as a person who is deeply devoted to his family and community, always striving to be a positive presence in the lives of those around him.

Dusty has demonstrated concern for others through his everyday actions, whether it be offering a helping hand to neighbors, engaging in community activities, or simply being a kind and trustworthy friend. While he has made a mistake, he has taken full responsibility for his actions and has demonstrated genuine remorse. I have witnessed his commitment to learning from the experience and working to make amends in a way that reflects his strong sense of accountability.

His dedication to his loved ones speaks volumes about the kind of person he is at heart. Dusty is not only remorseful but also determined to move forward in a positive direction. I firmly believe that his character, actions, and efforts to make things right exemplify the kind of person he is—one who learns, grows, and remains steadfast in his values.

I wholeheartedly support Dusty and believe in his ability to continue contributing positively to those around him. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jeri Muoio, Ph.D.

# KEARNS

CONSTRUCTION CO • CGC 060194

April 28, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

Great teacher, best friend and someone I consider "family" are the words I use to explain my relationship with Dusty Melton, who faces sentencing soon in your courtroom for evasion of paying his federal taxes. This is a grave offense, entirely shocking to me and completely out of Dusty's character.

In my greatest moments of personal and professional strain, as well as success, Dusty has stood "shoulder to shoulder" with me. He has been a remarkable mentor, guiding me to many of my best decisions and accomplishments, and comforting me through several significant life challenges. I truly admire him and his core beliefs, as I have experienced and been witness to them. He is an honorable man.

"Decent" is the best adjective that first comes to mind about Dusty. As the CFO of my family-owned marine construction company, it is my responsibility to identify potential new clients and formulate our proposals to chase the work. With Dusty as my constant adviser, he always appeals to my highest good conscience: What's the fairest price to charge this customer for this job? What construction approach will produce the best results on the fastest schedule? What out-of-the-box suggestions can you make to achieve a superior end result for the client? I know my job and I do it really, really well. Dusty makes me do better than that.

I first met Dusty in 2011. Dusty had thrown his energies into making our City of Miami a global megastar in the sailing community. Along with five other unpaid volunteers, Dusty was a founding director of the not-for-profit that competed – entirely on their own, but to the benefit of Greater Miami, with absolutely no public acknowledgment or thanks or recognition of any kind, ever, for their effort or even existence – to be the North American stopover of the 2011-2012 Volvo Ocean Race (formerly known as the Whitbread), a circumnavigation of the globe and one of the most prestigious sailing competitions worldwide. Miami was

chosen, beating Annapolis, MD, and Newport, RI. Dusty and his committee asked Kearns Construction to install the pilings and piers needed to host the huge sailboats in Biscayne Bay at downtown Bicentennial Park, which we were proud to do. That weeks-long experience allowed me to evaluate and get to know Dusty (up close and personal, as the expression goes) as a man with a huge civic heart constantly on the prowl for his next charity project to make our community a far better place for everyone.

In the years since, as I have become a close friend of Dusty, I have come to attach another adjective to this man: Passion.

Friends swap life stories. We brag about our accomplishments. (We tend to minimize our faults and failures, and his current personal crisis was a complete mystery until I read the Miami Herald's front-page article in January. I was not at all surprised that Dusty took ownership of his offense and expressed embarrassment and remorse for what he did, but it still threw me for an enormous loop. Simply state, this was heartbreaking news.) So, I came to know about Dusty's senior year at the University of Virginia, 1975-1976. I know today that Dusty is a very gifted and talented writer, and it must have been so back in Charlottesville. As I understand it, UVA got a new president in Spring 1975 just as Dusty was becoming editor-in-chief of the student newspaper at the end of his junior year. As Dusty has shared with me, the president belonged – as many other university administrators and faculty and city officials belonged – to the local country club, Farmington. The issue was that Blacks were not even allowed onto the club property as guests: Forget membership. Other minorities were also discriminated at the country club. Dusty says he did not know then, and does not know today, why he was so personally and enormously offended. But he was. And he threw himself and his newspaper (full-sized, five days a week, 4-6-8 pages a day) into battle with PASSION. Passion to speak up and go to war against his own university president, to defend the marginalized Black community of students and faculty and administrators at his school, for being a member of a racist organization at the same time the leader of a public institution. Dusty picked the fight. No one else did. Dusty was the voice. No one else was. Dusty never blinked. In Miami, we call that "cojones."

At the end of that school year, in Spring 1976, UVA's president abandoned his fake "work from within" strategy and quit the club. Right outcome, and it wasn't just optics. UVA got a dean of African-American Studies. And got a very public commitment for greater diversity in faculty and staff hiring. And the Cavalier Daily got the first Robert F. Kennedy Award for Coverage of Problems of the

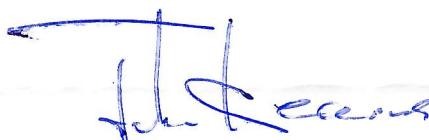
Disadvantaged won by a college newspaper, ever. (The adult winner that year also won the Pulitzer Prize.) I've seen the photo of Ethel Kennedy handing the RFK bust award to Dusty at the Kennedy Center ... a smaller version of the same bust that President Biden kept on the credenza behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office.

consequence, that we should not have. I seriously believe that if Dusty could roll back the hands of time he would have lived his life much differently. But Dusty cannot, and he must face the consequences of his bad behavior, in your courtroom.

You must decide Dusty's punishment. Does it make sense to incarcerate him, divorce him from society and deny him the opportunity to continue to contribute to the greater good of our communities (that now include West Palm Beach, where he and Mabel now live)? Or does it make much greater sense to burden Dusty with significant community services to enrich and improve the lives of our fellow citizens ... which, by the way, Dusty has demonstrated enormous talent for doing all of his adult life.

Your honor, respectfully I believe the answer is self-evident. I do not presume your answer, but I implore you to exercise as much compassion in your sentencing of Mr. Melton as you believe is appropriate.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John W. Kearns".

John W. Kearns  
Chief Financial Officer

EDWARD STEINBERG

3/10/25

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

As a 78 year old gentleman with considerable experience, my objective is to inform you about Dusty Melton. I have known MR MELTON for more than 40 years, and since retiring from my business in 1997, we have maintained a warm friendship. I do not spend even five minutes with those who lack character.

MR. MELTON has been a strong advocate for advancing the rights of the elderly and disabled, particularly in SECURING door-to-door transportation for individuals in wheelchairs, those with mobility challenges, and those with MENTAL OR VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. Without his tenacious efforts, millions of those trips would never have occurred. They would have been confined to their homes. His advocacy made a profound difference.

In my personal judgment, MR. MELTON poses no threat to society whatsoever. He is deeply remorseful and PROFOUNDLY embarrassed by his actions. I speak from a lifetime of knowing him. Please take this into consideration when making your decision. MAY G-d guide your ~~judgment~~ judgment.

Sincerely,

Edward Steinberg

\* My knowledge of Mr Melton is predicated on owning the largest transportation company in Miami-Dade specializing in the transport of the elderly and disabled.

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Donald Worth  
1390 Ocean Drive #207  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Email:dontonton@gmail.com/phone 305-742-9238

April 7, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing to provide a character reference for Dusty Melton. I am retired, and have been working on advocacy to restore the Miami Marine Stadium since 2008. This is my passion project and I am fortunate that my wife Nina is as interested in this as I am!

I was introduced to Dusty in 2013 and he immediately became interested in the Miami Marine Stadium. As a long-term Miami resident, he understood its cultural history and importance to the community. He took me-and the Stadium- on as a "pro bono" client. For the last twelve years, he has been enormously helpful.

-Introducing me to key people and, through his relationships, helping make strategic appointments that I never would have been able to get on my own.

-Providing sage advice as to strategies. Miami politics is tricky!

-Editing and significantly improving articles I have written. As a former journalist, he is an excellent writer.

-Attending numerous presentations I have made to civic groups about the Marine Stadium (often showing up just to provide moral support).

More importantly, he has become a trusted friend, honest and thoughtful. I have learned to trust and respect his judgement.

If you should provide some leniency and sentence him with community service rather than prison time, those who receive Dusty's community service work will be immensely fortunate. He has so much to give and can change lives. I can honestly say that without

Dusty's help and advice these last 12 years, the project would not have come as far as it has.

Finally, I am adding to this letter a set of emails that Dusty wrote to his friends about Mario, his step son. In 2015, Mario was charged with importing an illegal, Chinese drug and ultimately, he was convicted in 2016. This was the start of a terrible time for Dusty and his wife Mabel.

Over the course of the next 18 months, Dusty sent emails to his network of friends which outline the status of the case-and Dusty's efforts to help Mario. I have copied a few of these emails in the attached document. I think they show-unblemished and uncensored-the real measure of who Dusty is: Thoughtful, sensitive, caring, always trying to help.

I hope this information is useful to you in your deliberations.

Yours truly,



Donald Worth, Co-Founder  
Restore Miami Marine Stadium  
[www.restoremarinestadium.org](http://www.restoremarinestadium.org)  
[www.facebook.com/restoremarinestadium](https://www.facebook.com/restoremarinestadium)

February 10, 2016

All:

As most of you are aware, Mario's trial begins on Monday morning, February 22. You are among the many folks who have expressed their support and offered to be with us during the conclusion of this enormous ordeal. Mario, Mabel, our other four children and I are extremely grateful for your embrace, in so many wonderful ways. We're not certain we would be as confident and as strong as we are today, less than two weeks from the trial's start, without the broad support of our family, friends, colleagues and community. We are eternally in your debt.

The final chapter of this remarkable drama will unfold in Courtroom 13-3, that of U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno, at the Wilkie Ferguson Federal Courthouse. Immediately to the south and across the street is the Miami Parking Authority garage (40 NW Third Street, entrances on Third and on Second streets; it is the garage with the MPA's offices on the top floor). NO CELL PHONES ARE ALLOWED in the courthouse (attorneys excepted). Security downstairs is pretty efficient, a photo ID presentation followed by airport-like screening.

It's one of those "unknowables" what effect, if any, a courtroom gathering might have. It will certainly not influence Judge Moreno, who is a rock-solid, extremely respected jurist who manages his courtroom with authority, common sense and the occasional sense of humor. We'll never know what the jury thinks of folks in their courtroom. But many of you have asked to be notified about the trial's start, so this is it.

Day One will be entirely or almost entirely selection of the jury; as in, not much drama. Judge Moreno will announce at the conclusion of each day the time he wishes to see us the next morning. We expect the trial to last no more than four days. If you wish or believe you wish to attend, please reply just to Dusty (as he is the keeper of this particular "schedule") and Dusty will email you the evening before with the next day's starting time. We expect that to be about 10 a.m. each day.

Thank you again for all of your support, kind words and prayers. Our trial preparation is nearing completion, and we never have wavered in our confidence about the outcome. This American tragedy cannot be over soon enough, and thank God it will be.

Dusty

March 22, 2016

All:

Mario, Mabel and I continue to settle into our new, family reality. Things are going about as well as could be expected. Email and telephone communications have been established, although not nearly as robustly as we all would wish. Mario's commissary account is established, so he and we are able to make his life more comfortable. His roommate, er, cellmate is a pleasant chap from Romania ... with zero family or friends support group nearby (all are in Romania), which really underscores how lucky Mario is in this regard. First book shipments (all via third-party providers, such as [Amazon.com](#)) have arrived, providing a major distraction. Cellmate has a chess set, and is competitive. More good distraction.

The prison bureaucracy finally processed our visitation paper work, and Mabel and I have been to see Mario twice: last Thursday and this past Sunday. Prisoners are limited to four, one-hour visits per month. Mario is programmed for those two, specific days, and we get to pick on which four to appear within every 30 days. (We are back in at noon in two days.) As you might expect and desire, security is extraordinary. And the processing of paper and persons is extreme. There never is a single moment when visitors are not reminded, in large ways and minute, exactly who is in charge. P.S., it ain't the visitors. For Mabel and me, this is an entirely foreign world in every respect ... and our son is now a part of it, and will be for some time to come.

Despite the sadness in his eyes, Mario has a very good attitude. He is living life one day at a time, making it manageable and seemingly tolerable. He has met quite a number of inmates in his group (Floor 8 East of the Federal Detention Center in downtown Miami) and seems to get along with them, generally speaking. Those of you who saw Mario's new eyeglasses during his trial or online at Mother Herald's website will understand why nearly everyone has nicknamed him "Clark Kent" or "Superman." So there is a tinge of humor, nonetheless. A very, tiny tinge.

On the outside, we have met several remarkable individuals who have deep, personal experience with the federal Bureau of Prisons, and they have been enormously helpful as we (a) try to better understand the daily challenges facing Mario and (b) prepare for next-coming events, the most important of which is the creation of Mario's pre-sentencing report. Mario's probation officer gets very, very high marks from everyone in our circle who knows her; the initial, in-person interview with Mario last week seemed to unfold really well. We await our meeting with her near-term. Probably our most important take-aways: There *is* life after prison. And that Mario has not gone away forever.

August 14, 2016

All:

It has been quite a long while — since May 14, in fact, the day after Mario's 30-month sentencing hearing — since my last update to our group of some 175 good souls who have checked in over time to express their support and concern. Had there been anything worth reporting since then, each of you knows I would have hit the keyboard at once!

Mario, Mabel and I have settled into a weekly routine, our one-hour visit every Thursday around 1 p.m. inside the grim Federal Detention Center in downtown Miami (our alternative visitation slot of 9 a.m. Sundays is an invitation to an overrun zoo, though we did make an exception for Mabel's July 3 birthday. Talk about bittersweet.). Our group most every Thursday numbers fewer than 10, grandmothers and mothers and wives and sisters and brothers and girlfriends and the occasional children, all of us sweltering in the clammy outdoor heat until "management" deigns to call us in for the security process that, at long last, delivers us to a large meeting room. Mario's attitude and spirits have remained consistently wise, good and strong. He has his Wall Street Journal, his Financial Times, his several weekly and monthly magazines, and an adequate library of books to keep his mind occupied. He keeps largely to himself; interaction with others on the Eighth Floor only has downside potential. His good Romanian roommate, a fine chess-player, alas shipped out pretty early ... and there has been no successor, a good thing. Mario has not breathed fresh air since March 7. Think about that.

At long last, Mario has been designated. That's the technical term for "assigned a new street address." Federal Prison Camp Montgomery, at Alabama's Maxwell Air Force Base, is his next destination. The move could happen within days, or it could be in weeks. We'll know when it happens. It is a safe and comfortable (relatively speaking) facility, with good programs, and that's what is most important for Mario in our lives at this moment. A visitation/transportation challenge for Mabel and Dusty and other family members and friends now prohibited from being with Mario downtown, to be sure. But we'll adjust to that, in turn, as we have all adjusted to date. Interesting prior residents at FPC Montgomery include Jesse Jackson Jr., Chuck Colson, Chelsea Clinton's father-in-law and former Enron CEO Fred Skilling (he may still be there) ... I'm sure there are others.

When Mario's move is complete, I'll send details for sending mail. I'm certain he would very much appreciate hearing from all of you.

Warmest personal regards,

Dusty

May 15, 2017

To our four other children and our two family's loyal and mostly merry band of supporters, plus the few grouchy ones (you know who you are!):

When the oppressive, suffocating summer heat drops and spreads and smothers the city of Montgomery, capital of Alabama, early in the spring-elsewhere month of May, one must arrive armed with a pair of pliers.

You see (photographed below), one stays at the Renaissance Hotel, and every guest room has a single air-conditioning vent that blows the semi-chilled air straight across to the far corner, where the desk is situated. On the opposite wall one finds the bed. Sit at the desk, where the a/c pools, and freeze. Sleep in the bed and just sweat. This is a bad combination in a place bad to begin with. But grab the small but sturdy side table, hop atop it and clamp those pliers on every louver, then angle each of them over toward the bed's location and ***control the wind!*** It's almost mythological, spiritual. Well, it seems like that in Montgomery, anyway, a very fine community where cosmic moments are not that tough to achieve, really, in one's own mind. Trust me on this.

We had a very good visit with Mario this past weekend, 14 months and a few days behind us, a little under six months remaining before we expect him back in Miami, resident of a federal halfway house and far, far closer to home, family and friends such as you. He is very grateful for all of your communications and expressions of support, that is for damned certain. But this far in, even though closer to his endpoint, he seemed to me more weary of the grind than ever before. Although the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel glows ever brighter, I sensed a new and palpable frustration in my younger son that he still has not yet arrived where he and we all wish him to be, at long last. I'm including his mailing address (below before the photo) for convenience, but also with an important ask: Even a short, jotted note that you are pulling for him in the final stretch would, I really believe, do wonders to lift his spirits. And mine, and ours.

Think for a moment of Mario this upcoming Memorial Day weekend, when all of us are all grilling and splashing and celebrating a laid-back or perhaps electric three-day weekend. It will be special for him, I believe, in ways not exactly weird but sort of approaching that state.

Two family events of great consequence happened in this Melton family on March 7, 2016. First, Mario's conviction. Second, the birth in Waco of Ernest Charles "Charlie" Bauman V, first child of our youngest daughter, Olivia, and her great-guy husband, The Fourth, also known as CJ

and a home-grown peace officer in their community. Time between the two events: About an hour. (That makes for eternal, interesting anniversaries.) By virtue of family schedule and geography, Oli and Mario had not seen each other for quite some time before he went to trial. By virtue of the federal Bureau of Prisons' thoughts about Mario's new residence and The Fifth's mother's work schedule, Charlie has *never* seen his Uncle Mario. And, duh, vice versa. That all changes at the end of this month, rather gloriously I think. Oli and (seven teeth!) Charlie are flying into Miami, and the family car will be overloaded with that dynamic duo, Mabel, Mabel's parents, and Mabel's sister and her own great-guy husband for a quick, 13-hour zip up to FPC MON. Same zip back to Miami at the end. Please wish them smooth and safe travels! I could write a novel in my head about a son meeting his only nephew for the first time in the Visitation Room of a Federal Prison Camp in Montgomery, AL . . . and, perhaps, I'll do that one day.

Love and thanks to all,

Eston "Dusty" Melton **ONLY THE III**

Mario R. Melton  
Register No. 06415-104  
Federal Prison Camp  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
Montgomery, AL 36112

August 15, 2017

All:

You may recall my griping about the "oppressive, suffocating summer heat" in Montgomery when reporting on Mabel's and my Mother's Day weekend visit with Mario late in May. How understated of me. What little did I know! Really, truly avoid that part of America in July and August if you don't wish to experience the apex of horrible Southern summer weather. It ain't good there, then.

Mabel and Ana, her mother, are sweating with Mario this fine weekend. I am minding the three puppies and staying largely out of trouble (although too much unfettered time on this keyboard lends itself to just that). Mabel reports from their 8:30-3:00 visitation today that Mario remains in good and encouraging spirits, focused and concentrating on the path he must very carefully tread between now and the day he walks out of FPC MON for good. Having said that, each new day is way longer than the prior one, and it's enormously frustrating for him – in enormous ways few of us could even begin to imagine – simply to motor forward in order to greet the next day's sunrise. I cannot begin to fathom the complexity of his mental landscape: The end palpably in view, yet three months still of prison drudgery to arrive there at long last.

On that note, excellent news this past week. Technically, Mario's final day in federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) custody is May 10, 2018. We have known for some months that he was/is approved for transfer to a Miami halfway house about six months prior to that date – something about the federal prison system being horribly overcrowded and the need to move inmates out as early as possible (for which we are, in fact, grateful). And more recently the understood "target transfer date" has been this November 14. About a week ago, Mario was instructed to have us print and mail to him all of the available airline itineraries from the regional airport in Montgomery through ATL to MIA for November 14. His BOP managers would then select one convenient for them, share that decision with Mario, and then we could purchase his ticket. The BOP-selected itinerary was told to Mario yesterday morning, so his return date to Miami has become official at long, long last. This is a very good thing indeed. Mario simply needs to continue to tread his path with great care, so that the BOP is afforded no reason whatsoever to interfere with his November 14 travel plans.

Mario remains humbled by all of your expressions of support and encouragement, and vicariously so do Mabel and I. I've tried to express it on our behalf in every communication, but our family simply could not have survived this ordeal – which is not over quite yet, by any means – unless we had all of you in our corner. For that we are eternally blessed.

Love and thanks to all,  
Dusty

P.S. For convenience, the official address for communications:

Mario R. Melton  
Register No. 06415-104  
FPC Montgomery  
Federal Prison Camp  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
Montgomery, AL 36112

Candace O'Brien  
Attorney at Law, Member of Illinois Bar  
1040 Biscayne Boulevard, #3306  
Miami, Florida 33132

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

It is my honor and privilege to provide to you my thoughts about Dusty Melton whom I've had the great fortune of meeting several years ago when I became involved in a community effort regarding the illegal removal of a beloved and very old tree in Perez Park across from my home. I had done some investigative work on the matter and a friend of mine introduced me to Dusty to see if he could provide some guidance in communicating with city officials on this matter, something that meant a great deal to many of us in this community.

I was astounded and humbled by this man. He gave many hours of his time and expertise to assisting me on an issue that many may have not felt deserving of such effort. His dedication to making our community a better place and selflessly helping those who stand up was nothing less than awe-inspiring. He asked for nothing in return. No remuneration, no accolades. He simply saw a member of the community trying her best to bring attention to a wrong and in return he gave his best and his best was truly impressive.

We need people like Dusty Melton to lead the way in showing us what it is to become a caring and involved member of the community. I believe that the worst moments of a person's life do not define their character. Dusty has led a life of service to his community, to his family and to his friends. He has given selflessly to this community in a thousand ways. He faced some very difficult times in his personal life and his love and support for his family resulted in decisions that perhaps many of us may have made.

As a judge, you are bestowed with great responsibilities, ones that require ethical and fair decision-making and when one has done wrong, one must face consequences. That is your responsibility. As a lawyer, I understand the import of your function in our society. It is my sincere hope that as you contemplate and consider Dusty Melton's failure to meet his legal obligations here, that you will weigh that against all the very good deeds and selfless acts that he has given so many of us in his lifetime and as a member of this community. I think Dusty deserves to be given as much leniency as possible in this matter.

Sincerely,



Candace O'Brien

**Peter R. Ehrlich, Jr.**  
243 NE 59<sup>th</sup> Terr, Miami 33137  
305 798 1200

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

Re: Eston "Dusty" Melton, III sentencing

I first met Dusty in 2007. We were introduced by a City of Miami Commissioner.

I think Dusty is one of the brightest men and one of the most articulate writers I have ever met.

Dusty educated me and he helped me educate elected officials and the public to encourage them to make better decisions. I am a member, or I have been a member, of several volunteer citizen boards;

Urban Environment League, President  
Scenic Miami, co-founder  
Lemon City Cemetery Committee  
Lemon City Taxpayers Association  
MiMo Historic District  
Virginia Key Advisory Board, Chairman

Dusty would always volunteer helping me with causes I was interested in. Dusty helped Scenic Miami reduce the number of billboards in Miami-Dade County. Dusty's knowledge and his ability to solve problems was priceless.

Dusty helped to stop the illegal destruction of trees in Maurice Ferre Park in Downtown Miami.

Dusty has helped protect Virginia Key Park, a 800+ acre park, in Miami.

I know Dusty has helped numerous not-for-profits.

I know Dusty has spent 40+ years studying Miami-Dade County and its changes.

Dusty has reviewed perhaps every piece of legislation and Dusty, using his sky high IQ, has helped educate 1,000's of County staffers and 100's of County Commissioners, a score of County Mayors on how the legislation will affect the public. We need Dusty. Dusty is too often the only "adult in the room".

Dusty was a 24/7 presence quarterbacking the defense of Dusty's step son, Mario. Dusty worked 20 hours a day to help Mario.

I know Dusty adores his wife, Mabel. He talks glowingly about her constantly.

Please exercise your discretion to help Dusty. Citizens of Miami and in fact everyone who loves nature and our parks benefit from Dusty's knowledge and from his passion. We need Dusty helping us. South Florida needs Dusty.

Please keep Dusty among us making our lives better.

Respectfully,

/s/ Peter

Peter R. Ehrlich, Jr.

President  
Urban Environment League

cc Michael J. Rosen, Esq.

Robert G. Pinkos  
902 Whippoorwill Trail  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33411  
(561) 373-6809

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Court House  
Care of Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing to you regarding the sentencing phase of the Eston "Dusty" Melton case over which you are presiding. As you know, on February 19, 2025, Dusty pled guilty to one felony count for evading federal income taxes.

My wife, Margarita Pinkos, and I first met Dusty and his wife Mabel on October 1, 2022, at the Hispanic Human Resources Council Fundraiser. We quickly became friends as we share a passion to help those in our society that are disadvantaged.

My wife and I, both educators for the Palm Beach County School District for 35 years, have dedicated our lives to placing education at the forefront for advancing the lives of the students we touch. Central to that aim is our activism in the Hispanic Education Coalition. It is with great gratitude that we thank Dusty for his selfless dedication and volunteer work to raise funds for scholarships for the Hispanic youth of Palm Beach County.

In the years I have known Dusty, I can attest to his strong moral character and his righteousness to work tirelessly to fix societal wrongs. Dusty is an honest man with an overriding conscience that seeks to do right by all. And that is why his plea of wrongdoing has been so crushing to this exemplary man. I have wiped tears from his face as he has come to terms with his deep remorse and anguish.

Dusty is now 71 years of age, suffering from an advanced stage of prostate cancer, and facing the possibility of imprisonment. I cannot understand how incarceration would correct his wrongdoing or act as a deterrent for he is no celebrity that will be remembered for receiving the strong arm of justice. Rather, he is an old man, a family man, an honorable man - that is in the twilight of his life. I humbly plead to you to find in your good heart an alternative punishment for my dear friend.

Thank you.

God bless you.

Sincerely,

  
Robert G. Pinkos

May 13th, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Rick Rodriguez Piña, and I am writing in support of my friend and colleague, Dusty Melton. I have known Dusty for nearly 20 years, during which time we have worked in the same industry and, at times, as respectful competitors. Over the course of our professional relationship and personal friendship, I have come to know him as a man of integrity, compassion, and deep commitment to the people and causes he cares about.

Dusty is, first and foremost, a devoted family man. His love and dedication to his family are evident in the way he prioritizes their well-being and remains actively involved in their lives. He is also a person of strong faith, which has guided his values and actions for as long as I've known him. Beyond his personal life, Dusty is a hard worker and an honest professional who has built a strong reputation through years of dedication to his career.

He has consistently used his time, talents, and connections to serve the community. Dusty has been a key figure in supporting a variety of nonprofit and charitable organizations, including the National MS Society, the Boy Scouts, and the Shake-A-Leg Foundation. His ability to bring together public and private resources for the good of others is something I've always admired.

I understand the seriousness of the matter before the court, and yet I wanted to offer insight into the person I know. Dusty has taken full responsibility for his actions and has expressed genuine remorse. This situation has deeply affected him—emotionally, financially, and personally. It has placed a strain on his health and family life, and he has experienced a significant impact on his professional standing. Despite this, he remains committed to learning from this experience and making things right.

I believe wholeheartedly that this incident does not define who Dusty is. He has the character, strength, and support to move forward and continue being a valued and productive member of our community.

Your Honor, I respectfully ask that you consider this letter when making your decision. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,



Rick F. Rodriguez Piña

Donald L. Crissey  
7725 SW 143rd St.  
Palmetto Bay, FL 33158  
305-321-2011  
[elprimodonald@aol.com](mailto:elprimodonald@aol.com)

March 15, 2025

Honorable Judge Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Re: Sentencing Hearing for Eston E. Melton  
Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I am writing to offer insight into the character of Eston E. Melton as the Court considers his sentencing. I have had the privilege of knowing Eston and his family for 35 years, during which time I have witnessed his deep commitment to service, leadership, and integrity.

Eston has dedicated much of his life to the Boy Scouts of America, serving as a leader and mentor to countless young people. As an Eagle Scout, he has embodied the values of the Scout Oath and Law, consistently demonstrating honesty, kindness, and a strong sense of duty to others. His leadership in the Scouting program has left a lasting positive impact on many, helping to shape young individuals into responsible and ethical citizens.

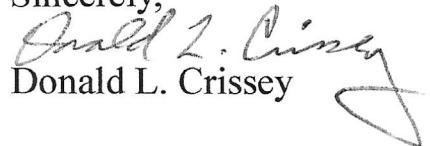
Beyond Scouting, Eston has devoted significant time to pro bono lobbying efforts for charitable organizations, using his skills to advocate for causes that benefit those in need. His dedication to serving others has been evident throughout his life, and he has always been willing to lend his time and expertise to help improve his community.

I fully understand the gravity of the situation before the Court, and I do not seek to minimize the seriousness of the charges. However, I believe Eston's lifelong commitment to service, his contributions to the community, and his

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capacity for rehabilitation should be taken into account. He has expressed deep remorse and is ready to take responsibility for his actions. I respectfully ask the Court to consider these factors when determining his sentence.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust in your wisdom and fairness in making this difficult decision.

Sincerely,

  
Donald L. Crissey

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

Greetings. This is the first time I find myself writing a letter of this nature. None the less, I feel that I have a moral obligation to communicate to this court whatever I deem helpful as you determine Dusty's sentence.

I have known the Meltons for close to 30 years. When they lived in Coconut Grove, my house was but a stone's throw away. Although my friendship with Dusty was initiated more so from our professional relationship, over the years it evolved to being much more personal in nature.

I am a lobbyist (and former politician). I have lobbied in Tallahassee, Miami-Dade County, The Miami Dade County School Board and mostly now, The City of Miami. Whenever a potential client presented itself for a government I did not feel quite comfortable handling on my own, especially when it came to Miami Dade County, I always sought Dusty's counsel and usually his partnership.

I am sure that your honor would not be surprised if I told you that in my line of business it is hard to find reliable, honest, hardworking professionals that are trust worthy. You might be able to count those type of people on one hand.

Yet Dusty is all of those things and much more. I consistently relied on him over the course of many years to be my partner on all representations that involved Miami Dade County government.

It was a great shock to me when I read about Dusty's tax issues and their consequences. I honestly could not believe it. The man is an Eagle Scout. But we are all human. We have all made mistakes. And I believe that this was Dusty's first and only ever mistake that involved breaking the law; you should be lenient.

I pray you will be.

Best Regards,



Manuel Prieguez

Alexandra Topole  
1 Knowles Road  
Stuart FL 34996

05.05.2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Re: Character Reference for Mr. Eston Melton – Case No. 25-CR-80001-  
Rosenberg/Reinhart

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I am writing this letter to provide a character reference for Eston ("Dusty") Melton, who has recently been convicted of attempting to evade and defeat his taxes. My name is Alexandra Topole, and I am the president of A Green World Construction (AGW), a certified disadvantaged business enterprise. I have known Mr. Melton for 9 years in my capacity with A Green World Construction Co. Inc. and as a friend. Throughout our time working together, I have come to know Mr. Melton as an individual of remarkable integrity and strength of character.

While I do not condone the actions that led to this conviction, I believe this incident does not reflect Mr. Melton's true character. Mr. Melton, a South Florida lobbyist, has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to his professional clients, pro bono clients, family, and community. Mr. Melton, as a pro bono lobbyist to A Green World Construction, went above and beyond usual business standards to assist A Green World Construction Co. Inc. with the disputes it had against Miami Dade County. Mr. Melton made himself available upon a drop of a dime when called upon. Mr. Melton worked hard to connect AGW to the right people in the community, drafted professional letters for AGW, attended AGW meetings to show his support, and met with lawyers and officials on behalf of AGW. During AGW's turmoil with Miami Dade County, Dusty collected, reviewed, and commented on pertinent documentation to save AGW, a small business contracting company. His dedication and work ethic are truly exemplary and a success story to A Green World Construction Co Inc.

I understand the seriousness of the situation, and I do not write this letter to excuse any wrongdoing. However, this incident does not reflect Dusty's true character. Mr. Melton (Dusty) has already taken steps to begin correcting the situation and has expressed deep

regret for the harm that he has caused. This experience has been a profound wake-up call, and Mr. Melton is committed to living with integrity moving forward.

Again, I understand the court's responsibility to uphold justice. At the same time, I believe in the value of mercy, especially when there is genuine potential for rehabilitation and when the individual is willing to change. A more lenient sentence would allow Mr. Melton to continue being a positive force in the lives of Mr. Melton's family, the community, and to others who depend on him.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter. I am available at your convenience should you need further information.

Respectfully,

Alexandra Topole

**Ben Gilbert, Jr.  
10301 SW 60 Ave. Pinecrest, FL 33156**

April 20, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I am an engineer and businessman born, raised, and working in south Florida. I had the privilege of meeting Dusty in 1997 when he was a lobbyist for a previous company where I worked and managed the business and governmental affairs with Miami-Dade County. Dusty was one of our most reliable, sincere, and professional consultants. He would always focus on the facts and the truth, and would seek an outcome where everyone benefited and was successful. Each and every time, I and everyone in our organization felt that business was done fairly and clearly, and we never worried about anything as long as Dusty was involved.

Over the years we became friends outside of work, and we would partake socially at many events and with family. Dusty was always devoted to his family, and equally to his friends and their families. We enjoyed our times together and missed him and Mabel when they moved to Palm Beach.

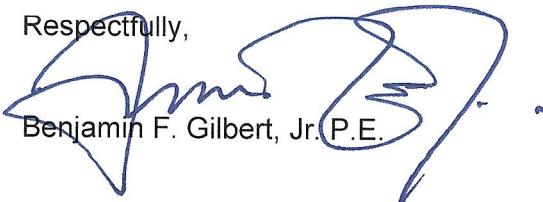
As I'm sure many of us were, I was shocked to learn what transpired. This is so far removed from the way he advised and directed his clients and friends' affairs. I know he suffered greatly with a personal family situation, and he always kept his head high and protected the people he loved most.

Given the invaluable work Dusty has done in our community, both as a consultant and on a pro bono basis to the non-profits that he supports, I firmly believe that our community can be best served with Dusty continuing to provide his services, talents, and expertise in a beneficial way as you and the judicial system determine best. It would be a profound shame to put him in a situation where he is unable to give back productively. He is very talented, respected, and smart. I truly believe he is remorseful for what occurred and is willing to pay it back in a way that benefits our community directly.

For these reasons, I personally and respectfully request that you find allow for restitution in a way that we all can benefit; and not in a way that prevents Dusty from interacting positively within our community.

Respectfully,

Benjamin F. Gilbert, Jr. P.E.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Benjamin F. Gilbert, Jr." followed by initials "P.E." A small period is also present at the end of the signature.

Ms. Truly Burton  
4000 Island Blvd, Apt. 2602  
Aventura, FL 331690

Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

March 11, 2025

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing on behalf and in support of a long-time work colleague, Mr. Eston (Dusty) Melton. I have known Dusty in my position as Executive Vice President of the Builders Association of South Florida. (BASF). I have had this position since 2011. Prior to that, I was the Government Affairs Director for this same organization and started with the BASF in 1982.

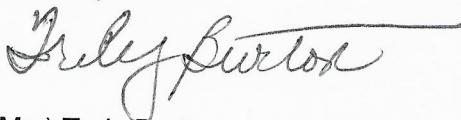
In both positions, I met Dusty when I was at the Miami-Dade County Commission, working on behalf of the building industry. Having been in my position for about 40 years, during that time, I have come to know Dusty as a hard-working person for his clients. His word was good – on a handshake. No emails, no letters – just a simple “yes” or “not today” was good enough.

I know he was and is devoted to his wife and family. Like my husband and me, he is ensuring that his children and likely grandchildren have had their college tuition prepaid, to ensure a positive future for them in this uncertain time in our country’s history. I know he has supported various charitable organizations as well, raising funds for them, too.

Given his family ties, devotion to children and our community as well, I know his current situation has been emotionally devastating for him and his family. However, on the occasion I have seen him, he is both contrite, while continuing to hold his head up, in the face of very difficult circumstances.

He is a worthy person in many regards. I would most respectfully ask that this point be taken into consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



(Ms.) Truly Burton

**DAVID J. WINKE, P.A.**  
**4720 S. LeJeune Rd**  
**Coral Gables, Fl 33146**  
**305 801 8700**  
**[dwinker@dwrlc.com](mailto:dwinker@dwrlc.com)**

May 25, 2025

*Via Email* [mjr@mjrosenlaw.com](mailto:mjr@mjrosenlaw.com)

MICHAEL J. ROSEN, P.A.  
100 S.E. Second Street Suite 3400  
Miami Tower  
Miami, FL 33131

Re: Dusty Melton

I am writing this letter in support of Dusty Melton. I am a business lawyer in Miami and having known Dusty on both a professional and personal level for over fifteen years, I can confidently attest to his strong moral compass, work ethic, and genuine care for others.

I met Dusty in my work as an attorney and he has always conducted himself in those matters with my clients at the highest level of honesty and ethics. That work led to a personal friendship and I often called Dusty for personal and professional advice. Dusty truly is a good friend to others.

I think it is noteworthy that Dusty has assisted numerous of my pro bono clients without charge. I believe that this comes from Dusty's desire to provide public service and use his gifts for the public good.

I can say without hesitation that Dusty embodies the highest standards of trustworthiness, leadership, and integrity. His strong principles, commitment to quality work, and respect for others set him apart as a role model in both his professional and personal life. While Dusty clearly made some mistakes that led to this prosecution, those are outside his character and the integrity that he lives by.

I called Dusty immediately upon reading about his indictment in the Miami Herald and there is no doubt how deeply remorseful and embarrassed he is. I have spoken to him numerous times since then and he absolutely takes full responsibility for what he did.

I wholeheartedly support Dusty as a person of exemplary character and dedication. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Sincerely,

*s/davidwinker*

David Winker, Esq.

Law Offices

**MARK A. KAMILAR**

2000 South Dixie Highway, Suite 108  
Miami, Florida 33133

Telephone: (305) 567-1112

Email: kamlar@bellsouth.net  
[www.KamlarLaw.com](http://www.KamlarLaw.com)

May 30, 2025

Honorable Judge Robin L. Rosenberg  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and Courthouse  
704 Clematis Street  
Courtroom 2  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

**RE: Eston “Dusty” Melton**

Greetings Judge Rosenberg:

I am writing this letter in support of leniency for Eston “Dusty” Melton, III regarding his plea to charges arising from unpaid taxes.

I have been a lawyer and run law firms in the state of Florida for 45 years, have been the twice President of an Olympic Training Facility, the Commodore of Coral Reef Yacht Club in Miami and acted as Officer and Director of numerous not-for-profit's, including co-directing and coaching an ongoing program in Fort Lauderdale providing a summer camp for Gold Star children.

I have known Dusty for over 12 years both professionally and personally.

With reference to his professional work, I have contacted Dusty and utilized his firm's services on numerous occasions over the years.

Dusty has always been professional and well received both by my clients and the government entities with which he works.

He displayed a near encyclopedic knowledge of the history of the City of Miami and always had a well earned reputation as a quality person whose work was worthwhile and positive.

On the personal side, I know Dusty to be a dedicated family man who always put family first and was proudest of the accomplishments of his children, both natural and adopted. His devotion to family including payment of substantial educational, medical, and legal costs always appeared to put the Melton family at financial risk.

The actions I remember most with Dusty are his volunteer work and efforts to protect public resources of the City of Miami.

I remember a number of occasions when Dusty volunteered with me in efforts to promote the Boy Scouts and assisted me with City issues when I did volunteer work to help Shake-A-Leg, Team Paradise (paralympic sailing), and ran children's programs in the City of Miami.

We all understand that bad decisions and not undertaking our civil responsibilities have consequences, but in my mind looking at everything Dusty has done for his family, the cities he has worked with and others, this is the rare situation that I believe deserves the greatest leniency.

Dusty has done much for the benefit of all of us and I am hopeful that with your ruling he will be reunited quickly with his family and again be in a position to serve.

Thank you for your consideration in this regard.

Very truly yours,



Mark Kamilar

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Wendy Kamilar and I have served in volunteer capacities for our South Florida community for many difference organizations such as Chairman of the City of Miami Waterfront Advisory Board, Faculty Advisory Board for the School of Journalism at FIU, Greater Miami Advertising Federation Scholarship Foundation , Chair of the Orange Bowl International Youth Regatta and Vice Chairman of the Volvo Ocean Race Miami Stop Over 2012. It is while working on the Volvo Ocean Race that I met Dusty Melton. He served with me as a Volunteer Board member and also as committee member on other community organizations.

Working with Dusty on the VOR and other organizations, I saw him always be a voice of reason, compassion and looking for what served the community best. I got to know him mainly through his volunteer activism working for the community. He pushed for public access to the waterfront, inclusiveness for all citizens in city events, spaces and organizations while maximizing greater exposure of charities so they can benefit from whatever board/event he was working on. I have always considered him one of the "Good Guys" for our community.

With all respect to the Court, I know that Dusty has pled guilty to a crime. I am writing this letter to offer fuller picture of him as a person in hopes of a more lenient sentencing. Outside of his business, Dusty has always offered his own time to work for the community and I have personally benefitted from his council, great ideas and commitment to making South Florida a better place to live.

Respectfully,



Wendy Kamilar

2601 Nocatee Drive  
Miami, Fla 33133  
305- 215- 3778

*Timothy F. Schmand*  
**106 South Federal Highway, Apt. N-606**  
**Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301**  
**Cell: 305/389-2521**  
***timothschmand@gmail.com***

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

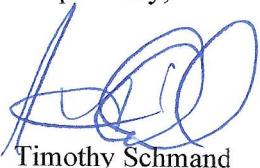
Though I had known Dusty Melton by reputation, I didn't meet him until the summer of 2011 during the planning for the 2012 Volvo Ocean Race. At the time, I managed the park where the Miami leg of the race was staged. Dusty served on the volunteer host committee, handling contract negotiations and other matters. He provided what I considered crucial guidance to a well-meaning but inexperienced organization. I admired Dusty's skills at bringing together a disparate group to achieve a particular goal, which the group did. The event's success positioned Miami as a leader in the global sailing community.

During the planning, I came to know Dusty's other volunteer activities, particularly his involvement with the Boy Scouts of America. As a former scout, who recalls fondly his time in Troop 157, I felt an immediate bond and I've since grown to think of Dusty as a friend. Subsequent to the Volvo Ocean Race, Dusty and I have remained in-touch through our involvement in a small volunteer group supporting the restoration of Miami Marine Stadium. The outcome of this effort looks more positive with each passing day.

While not diminishing the seriousness of Dusty's behavior, I am respectfully requesting you consider all the good volunteer work he has undertaken over the years. His efforts have improved the quality of life in Miami-Dade County and across South Florida.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Timothy Schmand

cc: file

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

April 1, 2025

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

It is our pleasure to write this letter to you on behalf of our dear friend and neighbor, Eston (Dusty) Melton III. We have known Dusty and Mabel since 2018 when they moved into the home directly across the street from us in Bear Lakes, West Palm Beach. From that day forward, Dusty and Mabel became, not only outstanding neighbors, but also close friends for the past 7 years.

One always hopes for a neighbor who looks out for your property when you are away, who is the first one you can turn to if there is an issue or problem with your house, or who is always available with guidance and support when need be – that is Dusty. We have two dogs and there are many times that we forget to close our garage door after walking them at night. Within minutes, Dusty calls to alert us that the door is open; that is always so greatly appreciated and super kind. When we had a problem with our oven the morning of a large family holiday dinner, Dusty insisted that I bring over my turkey and feel free to use his oven as long as I needed – he left the door open for me to come and go all day. And, embarrassingly enough, the exact same thing happened the next year. We have laughed about this so many times but the real message is how kind, thoughtful and respectful Dusty was to react immediately and offer his help no questions asked.

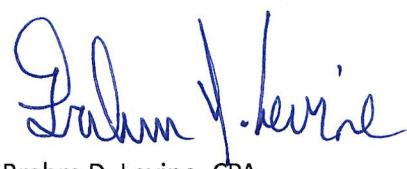
Dusty is a proud graduate of the University of Virginia, and when our granddaughter was visiting from Baltimore and had just been accepted, Dusty came over immediately with his yearbook, school newspapers for which he was the Editor, and shared pointers and information about the university. Again, Dusty's kindness and thoughtfulness was clearly evident and Dusty continues to bring over correspondence he gets as an alumnus for us to share with our granddaughter.

When Dusty shared his tax evasion charges and guilty plea with us, we felt so very sad as it was incongruous with the wonderful, sensitive and caring friend and neighbor we have come to know and love. His admission of his wrongdoing speaks to his character, self-reflection and ability to make right from wrong, to own his mistakes and to conscientiously commit to correcting them, which he is doing. We all make bad choices in our lives at one time or another, and yet so few have the ability to own them – that is what is remarkable about Dusty and why we treasure our friendship. Our community is better for having such a caring member among us. We know that the examples given might be small things, but when put together over 7 years, they illustrate the traits more of us should have - to be a kind, friendly, warm welcoming voice in a community.

We are proud to call Dusty our friend!

Warmly,

  
Carole-Ann Levine  
VP Southeast Region, Birthright Israel Foundation

  
Brahm D. Levine, CPA  
KSDT, CPA

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
C/O Clerk's office, Room 202  
701 Clematis St.  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I have known Mr. Melton for over forty-four years. I must admit that the beginning of our relationship was extremely tumultuous. I was the lobbyist for the City of Miami from 1974 to 1985. In 1981, Dusty wrote an article in the Miami Herald, "Where's Sisser?". He was referring to my attendance during the legislative session when I was struggling with depression and cocaine addiction. Then, just a few months later, he went to work for Steve Ross, my boss, and took my position. But I was still able to represent the City of Miami.

It took many years to get over my anger against Dusty. I thought he took an unfair position, but was doing what a reporter should do when there is a question of not protecting the public good.

Eventually, in 2001, I was arrested for possession of cocaine and went through the Drug Court process and was granted a pardon for my transgression, and fortunately, I have no record on file.

I have been clean for almost 24 years and have repaired my relationship with my son, family, and friends. This experience has taught me that everyone deserves a second chance.

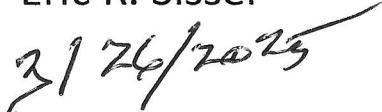
As for my relationship with Dusty, since we worked in the same field for many years, we would run into each other frequently and end up as compatriots. We would lunch regularly, and talk politics, and last year I recommended to my son that the Miami Lighthouse should retain Dusty to help with their issues at Dade County Government, which he did.

I've been involved in the political process in the State of Florida since 1972. However, I thought Dusty would never be complicit in anything illegal. It shocked me to the core to find out about his situation with the IRS. There is no excuse for not paying taxes, but he still has a good soul, and if there is any way he can pay back what he owes, without going to jail and serving public service time, I believe he deserves another chance. We all deserve a second chance. I have made the best of my second chance, and I believe Dusty will as well.

Respectfully yours,



Eric R. Sisser



May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

RE: Eston Eurel Melton III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I met Dusty (AKA Eston Eurel Melton III) when he first left the Miami Herald as a reporter and became a lobbyist over 40 years ago. I was one of his first clients. We worked together on many projects in Miami Dade and from day one became very good friends. He is truly one of the most honest hard-working people I have ever known.

It was quite a shock to me when I found out he hadn't paid his taxes as that was so out of character for him. Once he told me the amount of money he had to pay to his ex-wife and child support for his three children (through college and many master's degrees), I understood, as it was an astronomical amount.

Sadly, because he is such an ethical person, having to decide between delaying paying his taxes or taking care of his financial obligations first, it rested heavily on him and caused him a terrible amount of stress.

Dusty has many medical issues currently and he is in the middle of treatment that will continue for some time.

It is my hope that if he must be sentenced, it should not be prison, but some other form of punishment (if necessary) so he can continue his medical treatments, not put burden and expense on the government and he would be able to work productively to pay off his remaining debt to the IRS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Douglas Raymond Parent

12925 SW 109<sup>th</sup> Ct

Miami, FL 33176

April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

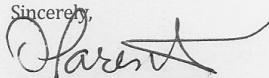
RE: Eston Eurel Melton III, AKA Dusty Melton

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I have known Dusty Melton for approximately 40 years. Your Honor, I am sure you will receive many letters in reference to Dusty's character. I say this because he is absolutely one of the most caring honest men I know. He always helps the little guy and will go through great length to right any wrong he could. He was a Boy Scout volunteer for countless years, and we lovingly called him "Boy scout" when we were teasing him on his righteousness.

While I did not know he withheld payments on his taxes, I do know he had to pay a huge, long alimony along with all the expenses of his three children from his previous marriage. He paid for their education which included master's degrees, housing, food, insurance etc. Sadly, his ex-wife did not make life easy for him. So, I understand why he chose to pay the family debts first. Knowing him as well as I do, I have no doubt he would have paid all his money due to the IRS once his family obligations wound down.

Your Honor, I implore you to go as lightly as you can in sentencing him. Unfortunately, he has many health issues currently and needs to be carefully monitored and has many treatments he must continue. He is a good man at heart and truly felt he had no choice but to choose family first.

Sincerely,  
  
Deborah Yoham Parent  
12925 SW 109<sup>th</sup> Ct  
Miami, FL 33176  
305-310-7457



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*Miami Beach, FL 33140*

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*Fax (305) 673-1242*

*info@garberandgoodman.com*

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I have known Eston Dusty Melton for well over 40 years. We met when we were both retained by a company to assist them with meeting elected officials. I have always known him as a thoughtful and caring person. I recall when he worked for the Miami Herald as a journalist, he impressed me with his impactful writing about major events throughout South Florida. Dusty has had countless friends who have been leaders in Greater Miami. I have always known him as an endearing family man with a commitment to his religious values. Sadly, he made a serious mistake which he has owned up to and has shown considerable remorse. I am hopeful that the respected Judge will take this into consideration when sentencing him.

I have lived in Miami all of my 85 years and have had my own advertising & marketing company for the past 61. I have represented major Miami businesses including Art Basel in Miami Beach for the past 25 years. I have known all of the State Attorneys since 1967 as well as dozens of our Circuit Judges and many Public Defenders.

Sincerely,

Bob Goodman

**Garber & Goodman Advertising Inc.**  
*President*  
**Art Basel in Miami Beach**  
*Florida Representative*

*Advertising*

*Marketing*

*Promotion*

9 March 2025

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I have known Dusty Melton for over three decades both professionally and personally.

He and his ex-wife asked me and my late husband Senator Edmond Gong to serve as god parents to one of his daughters.

As president of Florida's oldest communications and marketing firms I dealt with him in business, always finding him to be both fair and honest.

Not paying taxes was wrong and I respect that he has admitted so. He loves his family and children. All who know him know of his passion to help the children. Everyone deserves a second chance and I know once he has paid the price for his mistake he will help more people in our community, as he has done in the past.

Sincerely,

Dona Clay

305 261 6222

Roger M. Bernstein, Esq.  
3608 Royal Palm Avenue  
Miami, FL 33133

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Robin I. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Rogers Federal Building  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 203  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach ,FL 33401

Re: "Dusty" Melton

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I have known and worked with Dusty Melton for over four years. As a Co-Founder of the Virginia Key Alliance, I worked to make the Marine Stadium Basin in Miami, off Key Biscayne, safe for rowers, paddlers, kayakers, and passive watersports participants. The Basin, about 1,000 meters wide and 1,500 meters long, is ideal for these sports. Unfortunately, jet ski drivers, water skiers, abandoned derelict vessels, and illegally anchored boats made the Basin dangerous to hundreds of users, some as young as middle school age and some in their 80's.

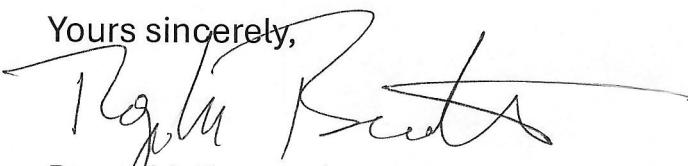
Dusty, with his knowledge of Miami City and Miami-Dade County government operations, worked with us to accomplish our goals. We were able to get he

Basin declared a "Slow Speed Minimum Wake Zone" which allowed law enforcements to patrol and make arrests.

Dusty was always available to us providing sage counsel. He attended meetings with us, often in the evenings. He never sought or expected compensation.

I have the highest regard for Dusty and urge you to give him every favorable consideration in his upcoming sentencing.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
  
Roger M. Bernstein

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg,  
United States District Court Judge Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse,  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

RE: Eston ("Dusty") Melton, III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Olav Smit, I am a retired self-employed entrepreneur in the hospitality business from Miami, Florida. I was born in the Netherlands, lived and traveled all over the world before settling down in South Florida (Coconut Grove), where I became friends with the Melton family and with Mr. Eston ("Dusty") Melton in particular.

His patronaging my local establishment for breakfasts resulted from acquaintances to a mutual respectful friendship, where I probably benefited the most from his knowledge and guidance through the generous gift of patience and teaching understanding of the local mores during long conversations and practical hints.

I came to know Mr. Melton as a leader, championing the local community through his social effort of doing good and volunteering his experience and knowledge. Many of us, in our community, could count on a listening ear and on the support from him and his family, as Mr. Melton is known to be a family- and neighborhood-man.

Judge Rosenberg, I humbly petition for your consideration by considering that my friend feels ashamed because he understands that his choices of letting his family safety have preference before his fiduciary duty to the state.

Choices have consequences and we all are aware of that, but I hope that you would consider that: given the longtime, being a good, respectful, family- and community-man, would benefit Mr. Melton to accrue some leniency in your decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Olav Smit,  
3692 Grand Avenue #273, Miami, FL 33133  
786-553-1000

EAS ENGINEERING, INC.

55 ALMERIA AVE. • CORAL GABLES • FLORIDA 33134 • (305) 445-5553 x305 • Cell: (305) 218-5177 • ESWAKON@EAS-ENG.COM

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

RE: Eston (“Dusty”) Melton, III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Ed Swakon, and I am a licensed Professional Engineer and President of EAS Engineering, Inc. I am writing to you regarding Eston (“Dusty”) Melton, III, whom I have known personally and professionally for over 40 years.

I first met Dusty through our joint participation in the Boy Scouts in South Florida, continued interactions through his dedicated work at the Miami Herald, and subsequently through my professional career. Throughout these many years, Dusty has consistently demonstrated integrity and reliability and has been an invaluable source of information and guidance.

Dusty has made significant contributions professionally and within our community. His involvement in various civic and charitable initiatives has positively impacted on numerous lives, reinforcing my longstanding respect for him.

Having spoken personally with Dusty, I know firsthand that he deeply regrets his current situation and is genuinely remorseful. Considering Dusty's extensive positive contributions and sincere regret, I respectfully urge compassion and strongly advocate for him to remain out of prison.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ed Swakon, P.E.



President  
EAS Engineering, Inc.

May 1, 2025

Honorable Robin Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rodgers Federal Building and Courthouse  
701 Clematis Street, Courtroom 2  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

RE: United States of America v. Eston Eurel Melton, III

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

My name is Richard Candia and I am currently the Business Development Manager with Florida Lemark Corporation, a general contracting company based in Miami. In my previous life I worked in the advocacy / lobbying field representing a variety of clients at the municipal, county and state levels. I've known Dusty for over 30 years, but I had heard of him long before I met him.

You see, Dusty was a force at the county level. There were few major issues before the County Commission in which he did not play a role. But his style was not that of the typical advocate/lobbyist. He did not go out of his way to be seen. He respected those he worked with and left the spotlight work to others. Over the years, I observed how he preferred direct, personal engagement. He believed in succinct and direct conversations and never went out of his way to seek attention for his work. I also discovered he invested time in helping others outside of his professional pursuits – quietly, without expectation of recognition or return.

And when I finally did meet him, I was able to confirm firsthand that his methods mirrored his personality. Dusty values a conversation, likes a story, and can find ways to relate to the hurt and setbacks of others. And when I needed a friend, he was one of the few that reached out. And frankly one of the few that I sought out largely because of the empathy I felt he had.

I understand – perhaps more than others – that mistakes carry consequences. I believe that the total essence of the person and their history of contribution should be considered. Dusty has spent decades quietly doing good for others, and I am certain he can do far more for the community by being in the community. Please consider my sincere request for leniency in his sentencing and that his lifetime of support for others be weighed against this momentary lapse.

Dusty is a good man. He has much more to give.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Candia".

Richard Candia  
richdia@gmail.com  
305-984-1645

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401 USA

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

Please allow me to tell you a little bit about myself. Born in Jacksonville, Florida, I attended public school in Jacksonville Beach and graduated from the University of Florida [BSBA] in 1967 and Florida Atlantic University [MPA] in 1970.

I moved to Miami in October 1970 after graduate school. It was that year I began my career in the Dade County Park & Recreation Department as a Park Planner. In 1979, I became an Assistant to the County Manager. As an Assistant to County Manager Merrett Stierheim, I occupied the office closest to his and therefore had daily contact with the press. It was at this time in 1979 that I first met Dusty Melton, a journalist with The Miami Herald. I got to know him quite well, as I was one of the point persons in the County for media response and Dusty spent a lot of time at County Hall.

He was always very up front and knowledgeable. Although many times interactions with press could be contentious, ours were always very constructive and conducted with the utmost respect. Dusty was always the consummate journalist, professional and above board. There were turbulent times; however, our professional relationship remained strong. Dusty was always honest and straightforward. He certainly represented his employer, The Miami Herald, with the highest of standards and integrity.

I also got to know Dusty on a personal level. Family was always very important to him. Always. Spending time with his children and attending their various activities was a highlight for him and me as well. I was always thrilled to be invited to family dinners. Community was also very important to him. He was a very vocal and strong supporter of the Boy Scouts. Personally, I considered him a real role model for dads!

Even though I left the County in 1985 to join the Women's Tennis Association and in 1990 the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, I stayed in touch with Dusty. He was still the same Dusty that I knew from my County days, a true professional and he never changed. Job, family and charity were always his top priorities.

46 years later, I am proud to still call Dusty my friend. I consider him as one of the top people I have met in Miami Dade County, and he has always demonstrated the highest standard of integrity with me.

I believe strongly my friend Dusty still has significant positive contributions to make to this community. I look forward to supporting him in those efforts.

Thank you for indulging me in telling you about my friend, Dusty Melton.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William D. Talbert III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "William D." on the first line and "Talbert III" on the second line.

William D. Talbert, III CDME [Certified Destination Management Executive]  
Former President & CEO, Greater Miami Conventions & Visitors Bureau  
1601 Nocatee Drive  
Miami, FL 33133



(305) 215-2162 les@pantingov.com  
300 Sevilla Avenue, Suite 215  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Rosenberg,

I am writing to share my thoughts about Dusty Melton, whom I have had the privilege of knowing for the past 14 years since I began working in Miami-Dade County politics. Throughout this time, I have come to know Dusty as an intelligent, hardworking, and honest man, deeply committed to the betterment of our community.

Dusty's dedication to public service is evident not only in his professional work but also in his willingness to take on pro bono clients whom he believes need a voice and an advocate. His steadfast commitment to fairness and his passion for helping others have consistently demonstrated his character and integrity. I know that in this situation, as in many others, Dusty's actions have always been guided by his unwavering commitment to our community.

I respectfully ask that you take these thoughts into consideration as you approach your upcoming sentencing hearing. Thank you for your time and for your thoughtful deliberation in this matter

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Pantin".

Les Pantin

**Armando Gutierrez**  
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**April 15, 2025**

The Honorable Robin L. Rosenberg  
United States District Court Judge  
Paul G. Rogers Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
c/o Clerk's Office, Room 202  
701 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

**Re: Letter of Support for Easton (Dusty) Melton, III**

Dear Judge Rosenberg:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing respectfully to ask for your leniency in the case concerning Easton (Dusty) Melton, III.

I have known Dusty for several years as a family friend, having met him through his wife during her time working for Miami-Dade County. Through our interactions, I have come to know Dusty as a kind, thoughtful, and generous individual who has shown deep care for his community and those around him.

While I do not seek to minimize the seriousness of the situation before the Court, I hope you will consider Dusty's long-standing contributions, his character, and the support he has from his family and friends. I believe he is someone who can learn and grow from this experience and continue to be a positive influence in his community.

Your Honor, I respectfully ask that you show compassion and consider leniency when determining Dusty's sentence. I know he regrets his actions deeply and is committed to making things right.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Armando Gutierrez